

1. 2000-2001

**IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE**

THE COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

This is a preliminary amendment accompanying a new patent application being filed simultaneously herewith.

The claims have been amended to remove the multiple dependencies and characterizing language. The abstract has been amended to correct minor informalities. No new matter has been added.

Attorney for Applicant  
Brian W. Hameder  
c/o Ladas & Parry LLP  
224 South Michigan Avenue  
Chicago, Illinois 60604  
(312) 427-1300  
Reg. No. 45613